


Provincial Outreach
Program for the Early Years





Chilliwack
School District


Learning Series Day One:
Fluency


April 17, 2025

Presenter:
Jacquie Anderson


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POPEY's Approach


POPEY shares research and knowledge around how we learn to read, the reading brain, and the foundational skills that support learning to read and write.


In workshops, POPEY offers a collection of evidence-based strategies for teachers to consider.


Teaching reading is not a one-size fits all model - no two districts are the same, just as no two students are the same.

POPEY meets teachers where they are at.
We invite teachers to consider implementing evidence-based instructional techniques to ensure literacy success for their diverse learners.


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



Not either / or

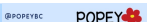


Decodable texts	vs.	Authentic literature
Research	vs.	Classroom practice
The art of teaching reading	vs.	The science of teaching
Individual student needs	vs.	Whole class efficiency
Direct instruction	vs.	Discovery learning
Practice in isolation	vs.	Practice in context
Mastery of skills	vs.	Joy of reading
Structure	vs.	Choice
Urgency	vs.	Joy

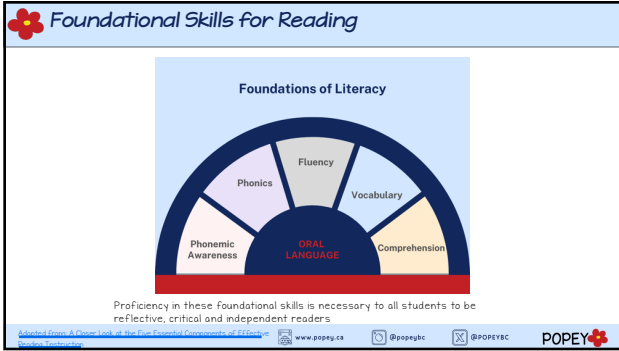
@mcdubois

 Shifting the Balance - Burkens & Yates, 2021

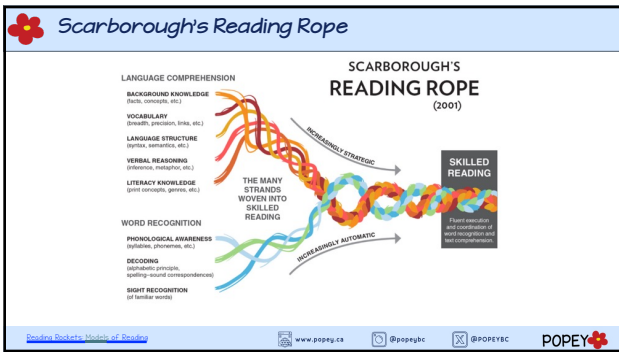
 Image Credit: Six Shifts Facebook Page



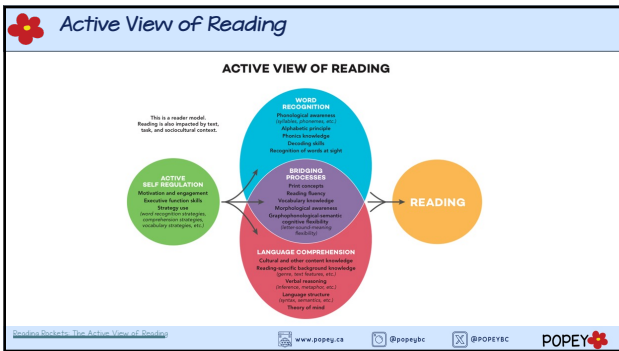
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Fluency

- Fluency is key for Comprehension
- It is a bridging component in Active View of Reading Model

"First, foremost and forever, accuracy is the foundation of Fluency."
Jan Hasbrouck

Fluency is not an isolated skill. It develops as other, underlying skills are consolidated. not a first/then, but a this/and

The Active View of Reading © 2021 Neil K. Duke & Kelly B. Cartwright, Reading Research Quarterly published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of International Literacy Association.

Reading Rockets: The Active View of Reading | www.pokey.ca | @pokeybc | @POPEYEC | POPEY

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Fluency Definition

Fluency refers to the development of three components: accuracy, automaticity and prosody and provides the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Duke & Cartwright, 2021)

Accuracy refers to identifying or reading letter names/sounds and words correctly.

Automaticity can be considered in two levels:

- word level** (ability to read words quickly and effortlessly)
- text level** (ability to read connected text including sentences, passages and books quickly and effortlessly)

Prosody refers to a reader's natural voice and expression

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What We Know...


Automaticity reduces cognitive load so there is more room for connections to background knowledge, vocabulary, etc. = COMPREHENSION

Components of Fluency:

- Accuracy**
 - <95% = comprehension deteriorates
 - Decoding is paramount*
- Rate**
 - Words correct per minute (wcpm)
 - Appropriate speed, not a race!*
- Prosody**
 - Expression, pacing, emphasis

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Building Fluency


Accuracy: we can build accuracy through decoding as part of explicit and systematic phonics instruction.

Automaticity: reading words with automaticity is a result of orthographic mapping (Ehri, 2014).


We can build **word level automaticity** through blending drills and Beat the Clock and other word reading activities including word mapping.

Text level automaticity is achieved through reading practice of connected text. Such practice can include repeated reading, choral reading and echo reading.

Prosody is built through teacher modeling of fluent reading during read alouds and can also develop through repeated reading and activities like readers theatre.

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The role of orthographic mapping in learning to read

Automaticity: reading words with automaticity is a result of orthographic mapping (Ehri, 2014).

Orthographic mapping is the **cognitive process** that supports a reader to recognize words instantly as sight words where they no longer need to decode or segment each sound to read a word.

DECODE

explicit instruction

→

CONSOLIDATE


authentic practice

→


AUTOMATICITY

repeated exposure

All high-frequency words are sight words, but not all sight words are high-frequency words.

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The role of orthographic mapping in learning to read

Each word has three forms:

- Meaning
- Phonology (sound)
- Orthography (spelling)

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K-1 Fluency Strategies

Kindergarten and early grade one

- Fluency with letters (names and sound)
 - Alphabet arcs
 - Missing letter cards
 - Fluency grids
 - Games: Slap and Bang!

"Pocket kids": assess, check-in, practice embedded in the day



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Where to start?

- Automaticity with word reading
 - Mid-grade one
 - Start with assessment
 - Oral Reading Fluency ORF: Words Correct per Minute (WCPM)
 - If accuracy poor, more time on decoding; if accuracy is good, but WCPM is slow, more time on fluency
 - WCPM reliably predicts comprehension

Timed reading

Timed retelling

Three passages per student

Repeated over the year

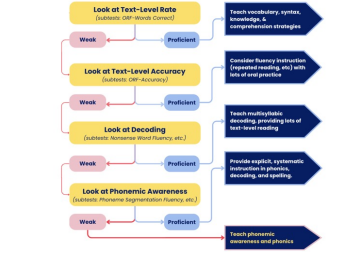
It's like a thermometer: can tell you there is a problem, but not exactly what the problem is

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Responding to Data

Decision pathways:
Response to data



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Structured Literacy

WHAT is taught:

- Both foundational skills **AND**
- Higher-level literacy skills


HOW it is taught

- Systematic and Cumulative
 - Organized, from simple to complex, follows a scope and sequence
- Explicit
 - Direct instruction
 - "Today we are learning to..."
- Continuous student-teacher interaction
- Not assuming all students can infer concepts
- Careful and considered practice
- Prompt and specific feedback (corrective if needed)

I Do. We Do. You Do.

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Structured Literacy

What to Teach

Integrated, Woven & Simultaneous

Phonology, Morphology, Phonics, Spelling, Vocabulary, Comprehension

How to Teach

Targeted, Planned & Purposeful


Explicit, Systematic, Cumulative, Interactive, Enduring

Data Driven

International Dyslexia Association, 2008; Swanson & Graham, 2003

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Building Fluency

READ-SPELL-WRITE-EXTEND ROUTINE (Blevins, 2017)


When teaching high frequency words, remember to engage all three parts of the reading brain:

- Phonological (sounds)
- Orthographic (letters)
- Semantic (meaning)

A deep dark imprint


instead of

A shadowy grey imprint



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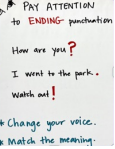


Fluency Interventions

- Whole-Class Instruction
 - the importance of repeated oral reading*
 - Using poems, short stories with scripts
 - Inherently mimics fluent speech
 - Early reading books are often typographically supportive with sentences printed in natural phrases.
 - Readers Theatre
 - Wide Fluency-Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI)
 - Poetry or short selection
 - Developed through the week
 - Read/perform for others

***Others:**


- Fluency triangles (paired or small group)
- Lessons on punctuation

The Reading Strategies Book 2.0—Serravallo
Book 2.0: Reading Strategies

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Fluency Interventions

- One-One sessions
 - Timed Repeated Reading
 - For accurate but slow readers
 - 3–5 times per week, 10–15 minutes
 - Paired Reading
 - Adult and child side-by-side, shared text
 - Could start with 'taking turns'
 - Read together, adult adjusting pace, student tracking text
 - Phrase-cued text
 - Phrase boundaries are marked with lines or slashes
 - Model proper/improper phrasing
 - Build up to practice with no markings

Repeat until 95% accuracy


Doesn't need to be a teacher.



Reach All Readers—Anna Geiger

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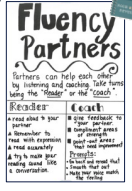
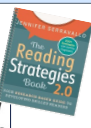
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Fluency Interventions

- Whole-Class Instruction
 - Echo reading
 - Everyone has a copy
 - Model read
 - Students read
 - Chorus reading
 - Choral reading
 - Similar to echo, but everyone is reading, and teacher gradually fades out
 - Partner reading
 - Match up stronger/weaker readers
 - 'whisper reading': start by whisper reading individual passages, then after a minute of practice, mark where they stopped, read out loud to their partner.
 - Partner can correct errors.
 - Did they read further the 2nd time?
 - Repeat, reading further in the passage. Compare their 'distances'


"Getting miles on the page."

The Reading Strategies Book 2.0—Serravallo
Next STEPS in Literacy Instruction—Sawyer and Glaser

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Building Fluency

Keep in mind

- More than just reading fast
- Don't teach phonics in isolation
- Avoid "round robin" reading
- Be mindful of how you use independent reading time




7 MIGHTY MOVES - KERNENY, 2023

Ideas for instructional Strategies

- Remember...Fluency is not an isolated skill
 - subskills: phonemic awareness, sound-symbol knowledge, automaticity at letter or word level
- Small Group instruction affords specific, immediate feedback
- Model, model, model!!!
- Whole Group Reading including
 - Read aloud, cloze reading, choral reading, echo reading
- Partner Reading
- Reader's Theatre
- Beat the Clock Timed Reading
- **Repeated Reading**

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Fluency Interventions

A Prosody Scale

National Assessment of Educational Progress Fluency Scale		
Fluent	Level 4	Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the story. Preservation of the author's syntax is consistent. Most of the story is read with expressive interpretation.
Fluent	Level 3	Reads primarily in 3-4 word phrase groups. Majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Little or no expressive interpretation is present.
Non-Fluent	Level 2	Reads primarily in two-word phrases with some 3-4 word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings are awkward and unrelated to larger context of sentence or passage.
Non-Fluent	Level 1	Reads primarily word-by-word. Occasional 2-3 word phrases may occur - but infrequent and/or do not preserve meaningful syntax.

Source: White, S., Sabatini, J., Park, B. J., Chen, J., Bernstein, J., & Li, M. (2021). The 2018 NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Study. NCES 2021-025. National Center for Education Statistics.

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A Prosody Scale

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Resources

Books & Articles

Active Reading Classrooms - Kelly, 2023

A Fresh Look at Phonics - Blevins, 2017

Shifting the Balance - Burkins & Yates, 2021

Reach All Readers - Anna Geiger, 2024

7 Mighty Moves - Kerneny, 2023

The Reading Strategies Book 2.0 - Jennifer Serravallo, 2023

Next STEPS in Reading Instruction - Smartt and Glaser 2024

Digital Resources

[The Strategies Adapted From A Fresh Look at the Core Learning Components of Effective Reading Instruction](#)

[Reading Rockets: The Active View of Reading](#)

[Reading Rockets: Models of Reading](#)

[Sarah's Teaching Science](#)

[Anna Geiger Resources](#)

[International Dyslexia Association Website](#)

[Oral Fluency Intervention](#)

[Reading Strategies](#)

[POPEY.ca](#)

[A Prosody Scale](#)

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